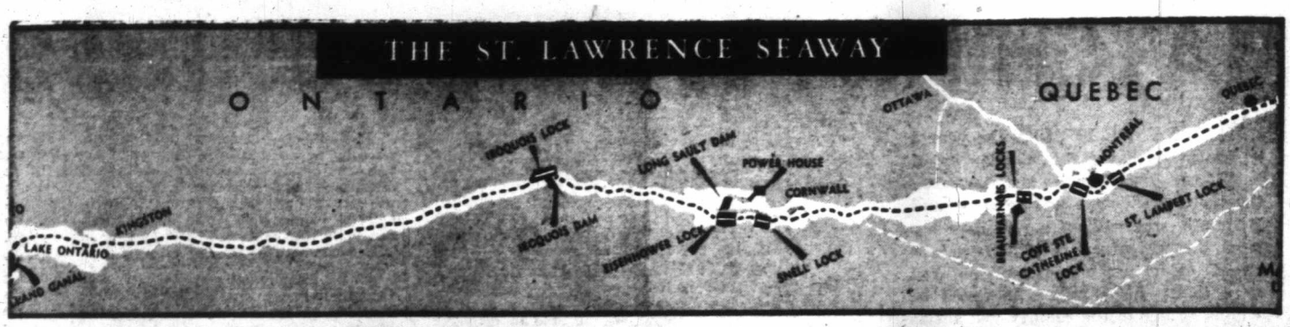

SEAWAY OPENS JUNE 24

HER MAJESTY the Queen will open the St. Lawrence Seaway on June 26.

This will be the climax of a project which has been the dream of men of vision for three centuries.

The fierce rapids of this mighty river, which stopped Champlain on his voyage of discovery inland 325 years ago, have been tamed. But they took five years in the taming by an army of construction workers, a tremendous force of machinery and the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Today the seaway appears to be the result of fairly simple engineering. It wasn't. The course of the ancient river had to be altered over much of its length.

The seaway opens the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes to world shipping, to all except the biggest ships afloat. It has become, in effect, a fourth seaboard to Canada. It provides a broad trade artery which is expected to do much to improve the nation's economy. The big ore carriers from northern Quebec and Labrador can now move upstream without hindrance to the mills on the shores of the inland lakes. The harvests of the prairies will move more swiftly, more economically, down to the Atlantic grain ports.

The work started in 1954. The aim was to provide a 27-foot channel which would by-pass the rapids and make the St. Lawrence a safe, navigable passage to the world's ocean trade routes.

The work went on unceasingly, summer and winter, often 24 hours a day where there were so-called "crash" programs. Engineers had to improvise machinery, for they were faced with problems which could not have been anticipated in the stream.

The job called for bridge and lock construction, as well as a vast dredging program.

The net result is that shipping can now steam 2,300 miles inland from the St. Lawrence Gulf.

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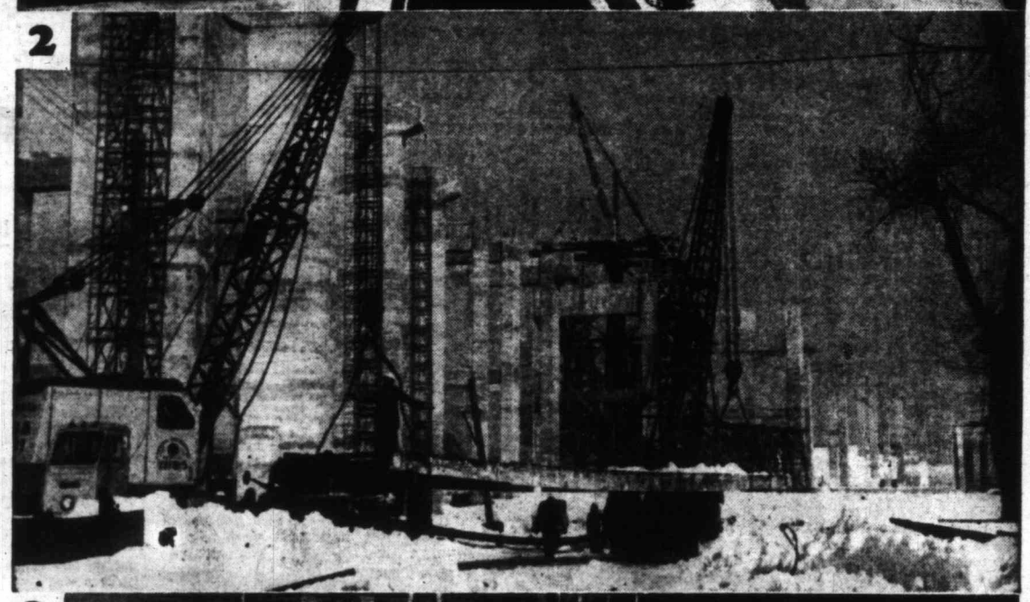

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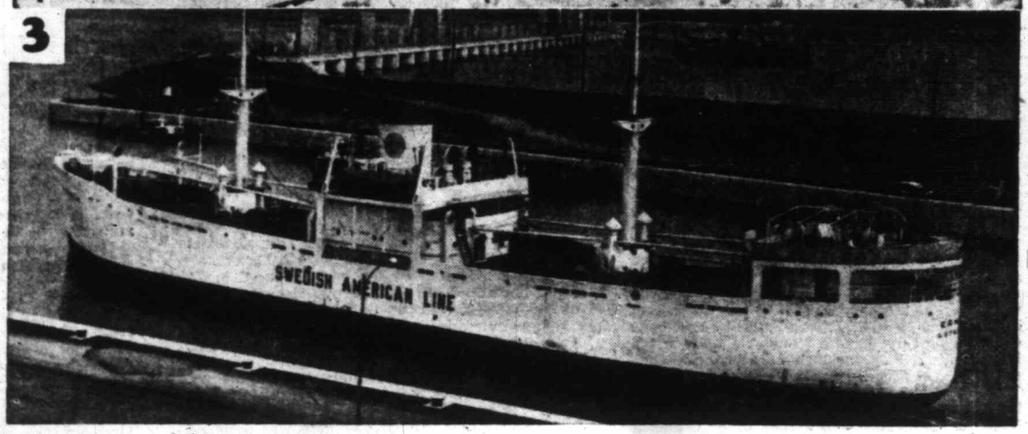

TOP: A map of the gigantic seaway showing its course through Ontario and Quebec. (1) lock at Iroquois, Ont., most westerly of the seven new locks which were required. Winter scene (2) is at Mercier Bridge, in Montreal, which had to be raised to give clearance of 120 feet in the seaway. The locks (3) accommodate ships much in excess of the tonnage of this Swedish-America Line freighter.